

## Notes on Meeting

### Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies

September-22-23, 1999

The Steering Committee for the Survey of State Library Agencies met on Wednesday, September 22 and Thursday, September 23 1999, at the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, in Arlington, VA. Mr. Shubert called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Present were (\*indicates the individual was present for part of the meeting; \*\* indicates the individual was not present at the opening of the meeting): Adrienne **Chute** (NCES), Denise **Davis** (Director, Statistics & Surveys, NCLIS), Patricia **Garner** (Census), Thomas Jaques (State Librarian, Louisiana), Elaine **Kroe** (NCES), Keith Curry **Lance** (FSCS Steering Committee), Mary Jo **Lynch** (ALA), Libby **Law** (Data Coordinator, South Carolina State Library), Kim **Miller** (NCLIS/LSP), Kate **Nevins\*** (ASCLA, SOLINET), Amy **Owen** (Utah State Library Director), Jeff **Owings\*** (NCES), Paul **Planchon** (NCES Program Director), Joanell Porter (NCES), Judith **Russell\*** (NCLIS Deputy Director), Cindy **Sheckells** (Census), Joseph F. **Shubert** (New York State Librarian *Emeritus*), Betsy **Sywetz\*\*** (Deputy Director, Office of Library Services, IMLS), Diana Ray **Tope\*** (Director, Cherokee Regional Library System, Georgia) and Barratt **Wilkins\*** (Chair, COSLA Research and Statistics Committee) and Alan **Zimmerman** (Data Coordinator, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction).

Excused were: Peggy Rudd (Director and Librarian, Texas State Library) and Robert Willard (NCLIS Executive Director).

The Steering Committee met from 1:30 to 5:30 p.m. on September 22 and from 9 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. on September 23. NOTE: These notes are arranged by the topics on the agenda, rather than in the order of discussion inasmuch as the sequence of discussions was rearranged to accommodate demonstrations and the availability of individuals.

#### (1) Introductions

Mr. Shubert noted with appreciation the presence of Ms. Davis, who is meeting with the Steering Committee for the first time in her capacity as Director of Statistics and Surveys at NCLIS, Mr. Zimmerman, newly appointed to the Steering Committee. Mr. Planchon introduced Jeffrey Owings who is Acting Commissioner and Division Director for Elementary/Secondary and Library Studies.

#### (2) Chair's Remarks and Agenda

Mr. Shubert expressed appreciation to Committee members for responding to the e-mail request for agenda items and for their responses to Mr. Planchon's August 26 e-memo outlining plans for the WEB-based collection of 1999 data. He also thanked Ms. Davis, Ms. Miller and Westat staff for their preparations for the meeting and

#### (3) Recent Developments in NCES Impacting on the Survey

**Web-based Data Collection:** Mr. Planchon thanked Steering Committee members for their prompt responses, helpful question and comments, and encouragement in moving ahead on Web-based collection of 1999 data for the StLA survey. He provided copies of the comments that several members of the Steering Committee sent to him and proceeded to respond to questions on the timing of the proposed change before providing a demonstration of the software.

Steering Committee members were impressed with the software demonstration. The noted features that should facilitate both the timely submission of data and the availability of data before publication of the E.D. Tabs. It appears that the system's design and provision for more than a single authorized person to enter data are particularly welcome. The provision for the State Librarian to authorize one individual to "lock down" the data once it has been reviewed and approved within the StLA is responsive to differences in organization and responsibilities of various individuals and units among the states.

Discussion ensued on responsibility for the "lock down." It may be useful for the Chief Officer to delegate this responsibility to the individual whom he or she has made responsible for gathering and submitting the data.

**Other NCES Developments:** Mr. Planchon pointed out Mr. Owing's interest and support for the library surveys and the easy transition of the library surveys to his leadership.

Mr. Planchon also briefed the Steering Committee on continuing initiatives to make data accessible and easier to use, NCES interest in conducting the school library survey (which is now on a four-year cycle) more frequently, and continued work on developing a "common core" of data across the several surveys. He said that it would be desirable to hold a meeting of representatives of the several surveys in the spring of 2000 to discuss cross-cutting data needs.

In Steering Committee discussion of the problems and delays encountered this year because five states did not meet the submission deadline (and, in some cases, were many months late in submitting) participants stated their great concern about 1998 data still not being available. Mr. Planchon was asked, if such egregious delays are experienced with the 1999 data, would it be possible to publish tables with blank lines for non-responding states and still provide a total for the responding states? (Or impute data for the non-responding states, thereby providing national totals?) Vigorous discussion followed, indicating deep concern about the delays.

Mr. Planchon indicated his understanding of the problems that ensue when a few states submit data very late, and he said that he would investigate precedents in other survey. He also pointed out: (1) that the new web-based software would make data easily available for all states that have responded. And (2) that peer search and other table production features will enable users of the StLA data to obtain data but without national totals.

Mr. Planchon asked about the problems in collecting District of Columbia StLA data and data from the territories. He urged the Steering Committee to consider collecting data from the territories. Several members of the Steering Committee expressed unhappiness with the Federal decision that the District of Columbia is included in the survey inasmuch as it has no state library functions – it merely is a recipient of LSTA funds. Mr. Shubert pointed out that the *The Survey of State Library Agencies: The Survey and Its Steering Committee* (a statement prepared in 1993 and most recently revised in February 1998) has always (as result of advice from NCES staff) included the following in its statement of the "scope of the Survey:"

The survey collects information on:

...(3) StLAs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. For a Hawaii and the District of Columbia (whose nearly complete data is collected and reported in the annual FSCS public library survey), only data on StLA roles and operations are collection and reported in this survey.

Mr. Planchon also provided a demonstration of new software that will enable users of the public library data to develop peer comparisons and otherwise produce tables for analysis and comparison.

#### (4) Review and Re-casting of Policy Questions on StLA

Ms. Davis facilitated a discussion of policy questions first identified by the Steering Committee at its September 1997 meeting. The discussion addressed four points:

1. Who is being informed by the policy questions of the StLA survey?
2. What information is needed for policy decisions?
3. What is the information you and other user groups need to develop policy?
4. Are the categories identified in the 1997 document still valid and useful?

Ms. Davis agreed to prepare a summary of the discussion. The summary is attached to these Notes. That report and the September 1997 questions will be reviewed for further discussion at a subsequent meeting.

#### (5) Continued Assessment of the Survey and the Information It Provides

**(a) User Survey.** Mr. Shubert noted that in 1998, the Steering Committee decided to survey of Chief Officers to determine what use they are making of the Ed.Tabs and what kinds of information they seek about other state library agencies. In recent discussions with Mr. Planchon and Ms. Davis, he explored the possibility of a telephone survey of chief officers and their administrative assistants, library development or networking directors, and other intended consumers of StLA Survey data (such as policy makers in executive and legislative branches of state and federal governments, ALA customers, and library and public policy researchers). After discussion, Mr. Planchon indicated that NCES has resources that could be made available to conduct a telephone survey and he encouraged further work on defining the group, the scope of the project.

The ensuing discussion covered the challenge of developing a purposive sample, identifying respondents who have used the data, the various other sources that customer groups use in obtaining information (such as electronic lists, COSLA-originated studies. Mr. Planchon commented on the success that the NCLIS staff have had in similar fact-finding by telephone. The following members indicated willingness to be helpful in completing plans for a survey: Mr. Lance, Ms. Lynch, Ms. Sywetz, Mr. Wilkins, and Mr. Zimmerman.

**(b) Expanding Awareness and Use of the Data** Ms. Miller provided a sample of the plaque to be given to the Chief Officers of the 23 states that qualified for the **John G. Lorenz Award** for Timely and Accurate Submission of State Library Agency Data for fiscal year 1998. She also provided a sample of the certificate to be given to the 23 data coordinators or other individuals who were responsible for collecting and filing the StLA data with NCES by January 15, 1999. The Awards will be presented at the COSLA meeting in Indianapolis in late October.

Ms. Chute described the work proceeding on a ***Digest of Libraries*** that will include StLA data. NCES plans to make the ***Digest*** useful to the policy makers and will include key data from each of the library surveys and possibly some related demographic data. The initial edition will be 250 pages, and include some 50 tables and text. Mr. Owings has assigned a high priority to the publication. The publication is planned for revision in three years.

Ms. Chute also described work being undertaken by Victoria Agee of Agee Indexing Services in developing a web-based **definitions cross comparison tool**. This tool will include

definitions from all of the library surveys. The FSCS Steering Committee will see a prototype of that work in December, and Ms. Chute will arrange a presentation for the next meeting of the StLA Steering Committee (in March, 2000).

In other discussion of ways to expand awareness and increase use of the data, the Steering Committee expressed appreciation for the table generator function and other features of the IVATION software that will enable StLA data users to develop tables and comparisons. Steering Committee members also suggested:

- Linkages between the NCES, NCLIS, and COSLA websites
- Conventional and electronic press releases about the posting and availability of StLA data
- Continued attention to the need for an index to the E.D. TABS.
- Inclusion of historical data for some key data elements in the E.D. TABS.

Mr. Planchon expressed appreciation for the suggestions and noted that there are NCES standard footnotes that can be used to publish retrospective data in an E.D. TABS appendix.

Ms. Lynch asked for suggestions for a 2000 article using the StLA data that might be published in a national library periodical. Steering Committee members had received a copy of the article that she and Mr. Lance prepared for the *Bowker Annual*. Steering Committee members endorsed Ms. Lynch's idea of opening such an article with some key, timely policy or program question on StLAs. There seemed to be consensus that the timing of such an article might be such that such an article might use 1999 data (rather than 1998, because of the unprecedented late filings by five states, thus making the national data appear so late) and perhaps open with a question on staffing changes as a result of technological developments and LSTA.

## (6) Developments, Plans and Ruminations in the NCLIS Statistics and Survey Office.

Ms. Davis outlined developments and plans that she is focussing on, including:

- Improving the NCLIS website and alerting people to changes and additions to it
- Making greater use of the statistics listserv
- Developing a new program brochure on the library statistics program
- Developing a pocket guide to library statistics
- Plans for a 5<sup>th</sup> public library internet survey
- Developing more data on library services to persons with disabilities

## (7) Status of the 1998 and 1999 Surveys

**1998:** The South Dakota data arrived on September 22, more than 8 months after the January 15 deadline. All but South Dakota, District of Columbia and three states met the January deadline

**1999:** Mr. Planchon checked his understanding of the StLA Steering Committee's advice on the 1999 data using the Web-based software to be available by December 15.

- ✓ Each StLA will receive a letter from Mr. Planchon and Mr. Wilkins in October announcing the new collection software and its advantage to the states. This letter will include a paper copy of the survey questions and definitions and indicate that the Web-based software will be available to submit data on December 15.
- ✓ Each State should file its 1999 data by February 15, 2000 (the software, of course permits the StLA to file parts when they are ready).
- ✓ NCES will arrange some training help at the December 1999 Data Coordinators meeting. There will be an on-line help desk available starting December 15.

- ✓ States that do not meet the February 15 deadline will be notified that Ed.Tabs may (a) use imputed or 1998 data for their states or (b) publish the E.D. Tabs without their data if they do not file data by March 15.
- ✓ Should one or more states have not filed by March 1, the Steering Committee will make recommendations on the problem at its meeting in early March, 2000.

## (8) Discussion of the Evaluation Report Prepared by Ms. Aneckstein

The Steering Committee received the September 1999 NCES Technical Report, *Evaluation of the NCES State Library Agencies Survey; An examination of Duplication and Definitions in the Fiscal Section of the State Library Agencies Survey* by Laura Riley Aneckstein of the Bureau of the Census.

The Technical report has been some two years in the making. Its purpose was to evaluate Parts K, L and M of the 1997 StLA survey relating to income and expenditures, with particular attention to LSCA. The evaluation had two objectives: (1) to check for duplication between the NCES StLA survey and “compliance reporting” to the former Office of Library Programs in the U.S. Department of Education; and (2) to analyze selected definitions.

The Steering Committee received at its February 1998 meeting (*Notes, February 19-20, 1998*, pp.2-3) loose-leaf pages from an “unofficial” draft of the report. The Steering Committee used findings in that draft in making decisions on FY 1998 and 1999 financial data elements and definitions (*Notes, February 19-20*, pp.4-6).

In March 1999, Mr. Planchon provided copies of two pages from a later draft of this report at the March 24-25 1999 Steering Committee meeting (these pages appear as pages 7 and 9 in the final report). The *Notes* of the March 24-25 1999 (page 2) report “implications of the Federal Cash Management Improvement Act... [practically eliminate] the difference between ‘income’ and ‘expenditure’ in LSTA.

Inasmuch as copies of the full final report were not distributed to the Steering Committee until September 22, Mr. Shubert asked members of the Steering Committee to examine the report and send comments to him by the end of November, 1999. Comments should focus on the possible need for additional changes in the income/expenditure sections for the FY2000 survey. These comments will provide the basis for a discussion paper for the March 2000 meeting.

## (9) Data Elements and Definitions

The Steering Committee recommended no new data elements or definitions. For 1999. Ms. Chute reported on the continuing review of data elements across the surveys. Following staff and contract work, NCES will likely hold a meeting on data elements in the several surveys in spring 2000. The meeting will include representatives of the StLA Steering Committee.

## (10) IMLS Data, Resource and Dissemination Developments

Ms. Sywetz provided a copy of the *IMLS Preliminary 1998 Annual Report, 39 States Reporting, September 1999* document. The Steering Committee congratulated her on the compilation of useful information on the state-based program, including tables, graphs, and charts summarizing information on the first year of the LSTA program, provided by 39 states. Several states have not yet submitted full reports for that year.

Ms. Sywetz described a five state pilot training in outcomes evaluation and plans for a conference of LSTA program officers to be held this fall. She also reported on research in museum-library collaboration, particularly in digital development. She said that a new IMLS website would be available in October.

### (11) COSLA Research and Statistics Developments

Mr. Wilkins reported that the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee has been expanded. Members now include the following State Librarians: Edwin Gleaves, Tennessee; Amy Owen, Utah; Peggy Rudd, Texas; Jim Scheppke, Oregon; Lamar Veatch, Alabama; Barratt Wilkins, Florida; Gary Wolfe, Pennsylvania; and Nancy Zussy, Washington.

He said that COSLA is prepared to cooperate in selected cooperative research projects, particularly in studies of state aid to local libraries, public library construction, and the extent and ramifications of internet filtering.

### (12) NCLIS Developments and Research Impacting on the StLA Survey

Because of the lateness of the hour and because most were present at her report to the FSCS Steering Committee, Ms. Russell thanked the Steering Committee for inviting Mr. Willard to report on NCLIS developments, promised to keep members informed through NCLIS press releases and the website, and invited questions at any time.

### Adjournment and Next Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m. Thursday, September 23.

It appears that the March 28-29, 2000 meeting date earlier established for the meeting in San Antonio may be a problem for some members. Ms. Miller will poll members to see how many members will be affected by the Public Library Association Conference, which conflicts with these dates.

Update (November 4, 1999): Ms. Miller has checked with Steering Committee members and more than half will be attending PLA. There is available meeting room space for Saturday, March 25 before the FSCS Training Workshop. Members were polled on their availability for Saturday and it looks like this is a better option. We would have to begin the meeting at 7:45 a.m. in order to adjourn the meeting at 4:00 p.m. (the hotel needs the room for an event that evening). Ms. Miller will inform the members of final arrangements.

J. Shubert

StLA Notes Sept 99 Corres Oc 99

### Attachments:

- Facilitated discussion: Re-casting of Policy Questions on StLA Survey Steering Committee meeting, September 22, 1999 – agenda item 4
- Updated roster

List of documents distributed before or at the meeting:

- Public Policy Interest in State Library Agencies and use of StLA Data – agenda item 4
- ***State Library Agencies: What Do the Numbers Tell Us*** – ***Bowker Annual*** article by Mary Jo Lynch and Keith Curry Lance – 5b
- FY 98 Control Log, State Library Agencies Survey, September 22, 1999 – agenda item 7
- FY 1999 StLA Survey Facsimile – agenda item 7b-2
- ***Evaluation of the NCES State Library Agencies Survey; An examination of Duplication and Definitions in the Fiscal Section of the State Library Agencies Survey*** by Laura Riley Aneckstein - 8
- ***IMLS Preliminary 1998 Annual Report, 39 States Reporting, September 1999*** – agenda item 10
- The John G. Lorenz Award for Timely and Accurate Submission of StLA Data (with list of 1998 state recipients) – agenda item 13
- Memo from Joe Shubert; September 2, 1999 to Committee
- The Survey of State Library Agencies: The Survey and Its Steering Committee
- StLA Survey Steering Committee roster
- September 22-23, 1999 meeting agenda
- Notes from March 24-25, 1999 meeting
- September 22-23, 1999 Meeting Participant List, provided by Westat